



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

EDITORIAL

Poise is the watchword in the conflicts of the day. This does not imply at all that the officers of the National Council of Teachers

Poise of English are hide-bound conservatives. Far from it. The whole history of the Council has been a series of advance steps. Nevertheless, each step has been taken after another that preceded it. There has been no ballooning in the progress of the Council. The movements which have been successively favored have been consistent developments from tried certainties to probable improvements. Hence it is that poise, at the present moment, does not signify standpatism.

Now three of the conflicting tendencies concern accuracy first, or effectiveness first; the project or the unrelated essay; and the battle of the books. With regard to the conflicting ideals in the teaching of English composition, probably it is safe to say that the far-seeing English teachers of the country, whether in elementary school, secondary school, or college, are taking the position that the whole spirit or personality, which we might dub effectiveness, is more to be desired than fine garments merely. In other words, what is aimed at is a content showing intelligent and truthful thought, expressed with satisfactory attention to technique. Probably no one of these far-seeing teachers feels that fluency first is desirable, or that accurate expression of nothing is desirable. There must be something to say, and it must be said well. Here, then, the position of the Council is on safe ground but in the van of the contenders.

In the conflict concerning the use of projects as opposed to the assignment of exercises in composition unrelated to life-activities, the Council stands for the social point of view. Wherever two or three alert teachers of high school English are gathered together in the United States, there you will hear discussion of ways and means for enlisting the whole activity of the boys and girls in the development of their power of expression through speech and

writing. There is no divine sanctity in such shibboleths as "socialized recitation" or "project," but it may safely be said that the spirit behind both of these has begun to pervade the teaching of English throughout the land. In just one field of English teaching there should be more attention to this point of view, and that is among the teachers of English in the colleges. This may be said with some assurance, even though it is recognized that there are many college teachers of English who are in the forefront in recognizing the social point of view in English composition.

In the battle of the books, surely poise on the part of the Council is desirable. Any English teacher who feels that because a book has been off the press more than twenty years, it is therefore damned for English teaching, is a fish out of water. On the contrary, any English teacher who feels that a book published since nineteen hundred must necessarily be an anathema, is also a fish out of water. The point of view of the teaching of literature has shifted from the mere gerund-grinding and cramming of notes and worrying over rhetorical details to the consideration of the essential life in any literary work which is in the hands of the student. Now, the test for the placing of any piece of literature in the hands of a class is whether it is really literary or not, that is, whether it is filled with the spirit of life, whether it truly reflects the life of mankind as it was at any period, or, better still, as it is and has been during the progress of the race. With this position firmly taken and with steady and happy pursuit of this ideal in the teaching of literature, all our friends of the brotherhood throughout the country may go forward with rejoicing in the work of bringing up the young people of our country to an appreciation of the real and vital and permanent things of life as expressed and implied in real literature, old or new.

CHARLES ROBERT GASTON

President, National Council of Teachers of English

RICHMOND HILL HIGH SCHOOL
NEW YORK CITY